



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Committee on Anthropological
Research in Museums records, 1965-1973

National Anthropological Archives
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Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Collection Overview | 1 |
| Administrative Information | 1 |
| Arrangement..... | 2 |
| Historical Note..... | 1 |
| Scope and Contents..... | 2 |
| Names and Subjects | 2 |
| Container Listing | |

Collection Overview

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| Repository: | National Anthropological Archives |
| Title: | Committee on Anthropological Research in Museums records |
| Date: | 1965-1973 |
| Identifier: | NAA.1975-24a |
| Creator: | Committee on Anthropological Research in Museums |
| Extent: | 2.5 Linear feet |
| Language: | English . |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The records were donated to the National Anthropological Archives by William Nelson Fenton in November, 1974.

Restrictions

The Committee on Anthropological Research in Museums records are open for research.

Access to the Committee on Anthropological Research in Museums records requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Historical Note

The Committee on Anthropological Research in Museums (CARM) was established in 1965 by the executive board of the American Anthropological Association. Behind the action were the urgings of William Nelson Fenton and Donald Collier, who saw a need "to get museums back into the main stream of professional anthropology and . . . enlist the interest of a new generation of anthropologists to utilize museum collections for research purposes."

Throughout its existence, CARM maintained some interest in rather broad avenues to these goals. Hoping to make museum positions more attractive to young anthropologists, to assure adequate documentation and preservation of anthropological collections, and to promote the compilation of inventories of collections, its members organized and participated in conferences and published articles in professional journals. In time, however, CARM's main efforts became focused on two rather special activities.

First, it promoted the establishment of a Museum Research Fellowship Program by the Wenner-Gren Foundation and then served the Foundation screening applicants. The fellowships were primarily for pre- and postdoctoral research but they were also offered to promising undergraduates. Second, CARM served as an advisory group for several projects to inventory ethnological collections. Particularly it was involved in projects in Oklahoma and Missouri and in John E. Hunter's compilation of Inventory of Ethnological Collections in Museums of the United States and Canada (1967). In 1971, CARM's affiliation was changed

from the American Anthropological Association to the American Ethnological Society. By this time, most of its work had come to concern the fellowship program. Late in 1973, however, the Wenner-Gren Foundation ceased funding the program and CARM's main purpose came to an end. It was then reorganized into a much larger Council for Museum Anthropology, which took up CARM's original broad purposes.

Throughout most of CARM's existence, Fenton was its chairman. By his own wishes, he was replaced in that post by Stanley Arthur Freed only a few months before the reorganization. CARM membership varied but little and included William Russel Bascom, Stephan F. Borhegyi, Philip John C. Dark, Ernest S. Dodge, Fred Rusell Eggan, Tom F. S. McFeat, Lita S. Osmundsen, Alex F. Riciardelli, and William Curtis Sturtevant.

Scope and Contents

In addition to CARM's direct activities, its records reflect to a small degree the general problems and concerns of museums, contemporary research in material culture, and conflicts between differing anthropological interests.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into 4 series: (1) Records relating to membership and (2) correspondence, 1962-1973; (3) records relating to the Wenner-Gren Museum Research Fellowship Program, 1964-1972; (4) reference file, 1956-1971.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Anthropological museums and collections
- Museums
- Professional associations

Types of Materials:

- Manuscripts